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**EXTRADITED COLOMBIAN MONEY LAUNDERER FOR NORTE VALLE  
CARTEL SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that PABLO TRUJILLO, a money launderer from Bogota, Colombia, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN to a term of imprisonment of 10 years, the maximum allowed by law, for conspiracy to commit money laundering. The sentence resulted from TRUJILLO's conviction in August 2003 for his participation in a scheme to launder approximately \$1.7 million in drug proceeds collected in the United States through bank accounts he operated in Colombia.

The charges in this case resulted from "Operation Wirecutter," a joint U.S.-Colombian investigation into the laundering of millions of dollars in narcotics proceeds from the United States to drug traffickers in Colombia.

According to the evidence at trial and at sentencing, in 2001, TRUJILLO worked at a company called Sierras del Nilo

("Sierras") in Bogota, Colombia, a company that laundered the narcotics proceeds of Juan Carlos Ramirez-Abadia, a/k/a "Chupetta," an indicted fugitive who is a leader of the Norte Valle Cartel. While working at Sierras, TRUJILLO operated several accounts in Colombian banks in the names of Sierras and other Colombian companies.

During this same period, the testimony demonstrated that TRUJILLO acted as a "money broker" who arranged for the picking up of cash drug proceeds in the United States and then receiving the proceeds after they were wired into bank accounts under his control in Colombia. According to the evidence at trial, money brokers such as TRUJILLO serve as intermediaries between the Colombian drug traffickers and the drug dealers in the United States.

According to the evidence at trial, TRUJILLO instructed others to transfer the drug money collected in the United States into accounts TRUJILLO operated in Colombia. TRUJILLO then paid an equivalent amount in pesos in Colombia, less a commission TRUJILLO earned based on a percentage of the laundered funds. The evidence at trial showed that from June 2001 through January 2002, TRUJILLO facilitated the repatriation of approximately \$1.7 million in narcotics proceeds into Colombian accounts. The evidence at trial also demonstrated that TRUJILLO utilized numeric and verbal codes to arrange for the transfer of funds and paid exorbitant fees to individuals involved in these money laundering transactions.

TRUJILLO was among seven defendants extradited from Colombia thus far as part of Operation Wirecutter. These extraditions are believed to be the first from Colombia to the United States solely on charges of laundering narcotics proceeds. To date, the international investigation has resulted in 42 arrests in the United States and Colombia, seizures of more than \$7 million in narcotics proceeds and 725 kilograms of cocaine. All 42 defendants have been convicted by plea or trial.

Mr. KELLEY praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the El Dorado Task Force and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and thanked the Colombian Department of Administrative Security for its assistance in the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney NEIL M. BAROFSKY is in charge of the prosecution.

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